

Application No. 10/697,059

Amendment dated 08/28/2006 responding to Office Action dated 06/29/2006

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CENTRAL FAX CENTER
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AMENDMENTS

In the Claims

Please cancel claims 2-4, 12, 15, 21-23, 26, 28-33, and amend claims 1, 5-6, 8, 11, 13, 25, as follows. The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

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LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A rack system for carrying cargo items on the rear of a recreational vehicle having a substantially vertical surface, a rear bumper, and a hitch receiver, the rack system comprising:

a first hitch for coupling to the hitch receiver;

a tray coupled to the first hitch for supporting weight of the cargo items;

bumper connectors for coupling to the bumper at positions substantially removed from the hitch receiver;

vertical rails;

horizontal rails connected to the vertical rails;

at least one of the vertical rails and the horizontal rails coupled to the bumper connectors;

and

support bars extending substantially ~~longitudinally~~ rearward and coupled to at least one of the vertical and horizontal rails, for supporting the cargo items.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The rack system of ~~claim 3~~ claim 1 further comprising:
at least one stabilizer bar coupled to the tray and to a bumper connector.

6. (Currently Amended) The rack system of ~~claim 3~~ claim 1 further comprising:
a combination lockbox securely coupled to the tray.

7. (Original) The rack system of claim 1 further comprising:
rail connectors coupling the horizontal rails to the vertical rails.

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8. (Currently Amended) The rack system of claim 7 wherein:
at least some of the rail connectors are laterally movable to enable lateral repositioning of at least one of the rails.

9. (Original) The rack system of claim 1 wherein:
the at least one of the vertical rails and the horizontal rails is pivotably coupled to the bumper connectors.

10. (Original) The rack system of claim 9 further comprising:
a spring coupled to at least one of the bumper connectors to maintain an upper portion of the rack system against the vehicle under pressure.

11. (Currently Amended) The rack system of claim 1 further comprising:
at least one pad coupled to at least one of the vertical and horizontal rails in a position such that, when the rack system is mounted to the vehicle, the pad will contact the vehicle, to protect the vehicle from damage by the rack system.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The rack system of ~~claim 12~~ claim 1 wherein:
bar connectors coupling the support bars to the rails;
wherein at least one of the bar connectors is laterally movable to enable lateral repositioning of its support bar to adapt the rack system for carrying different cargo items.

14. (Currently Amended) A cargo rack for carrying elongated cargo such as surfboards on a substantially vertical rear surface of a recreational vehicle ~~such as an RV, the recreational vehicle having a rear bumper and a hitch receiver,~~ the cargo rack comprising:

bumper connectors for coupling to ~~a~~ the rear bumper of the recreational vehicle;

vertical rails coupled to the bumper connectors;

horizontal rails coupled to the vertical rails;

support bars coupled to the horizontal rails and extending ~~backward~~ rearward for holding the elongated cargo in position; and

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a tray for coupling to a hitch receiver of the vehicle, for bearing the weight of the elongated cargo and positioned significantly below the support bars.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The cargo rack of claim 14 wherein:

at least one of the horizontal rails is slidably coupled to the vertical rails.

17. (Original) The cargo rack of claim 16 wherein:

at least one of the support bars is slidably coupled to the horizontal rails.

18. (Original) The cargo rack of claim 14 further comprising:

at least one stabilizer coupled to the tray and to one of a bumper connector and a vertical rail.

19. (Original) The cargo rack of claim 14 further comprising:

springs coupled to the vertical rails and to the bumper connectors for pressing the cargo rack against the back of the vehicle.

20. (Original) The cargo rack of claim 14 wherein:

the cargo rack is adapted for being mounted to the vehicle without any modifications of the vehicle, with the cargo rack being connected to the vehicle only at the bumper and the receiver hitch.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Original) The cargo rack of claim 14 wherein:

the support bars can be repositioned to adapt the cargo rack for carrying a variety of cargo items.

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25. (Currently Amended) A recreational vehicle comprising:
a frame;
a body coupled to the frame;
a rear bumper coupled to the frame at a rear of the body;
a hitch receiver coupled to the frame at the rear of the body;
a cargo rack coupled only to the rear bumper and including,
vertical rails,
horizontal rails coupled to the vertical rails, and
support bars coupled to the horizontal rails for holding elongated cargo items in
position; and
a tray coupled to the hitch receiver for bearing the weight of the cargo items;
wherein the elongated cargo items include at least one of a surfboard, a kayak, and a
ladder.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Original) The vehicle of claim 25 wherein:

the support bars are movably coupled to the horizontal rails, whereby they may be repositioned to adapt the cargo rack for use with a variety of cargo items.

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Cancelled)